AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions and listings of claims in the application:

1-15. (Cancelled)

16. (Currently Amended) A method for the ~~qualitative and quantitative~~ determination of ~~the multimers~~ multimers of multimer-forming ~~therapeutic~~ proteins by gel electrophoresis,

wherein a sample containing von Willebrand factor or fibrinogen is fractionated by submarine electrophoresis using a continuous, homogeneous agarose gel free of lumps, [[~~and~~]]

wherein ~~the multimer~~ multimer bands are visualized ~~immunochemically~~ by immunostaining after a Western blot analysis ~~by an immunochemical method chosen from~~ using a specific antibody-enzyme conjugate on [[~~the~~]] a blotting membrane ~~and a suitable~~ or are visualized by a dye in the gel,

and optionally, wherein stained bands on the blotting membrane or the gel are quantified.

17. (Currently Amended) The method as claimed in claim 16, wherein the ~~suitable~~ dye is a blue stain.

18. (Currently Amended) The method as claimed in claim 16, wherein the multimer-forming ~~therapeutic~~ protein is fibrinogen.

19. (Currently Amended) The method as claimed in claim 16, wherein the multimer-forming ~~therapeutic~~ protein is von Willebrand factor.

20. (Currently Amended) The method as claimed in claim 18, wherein ~~an agarose gel with~~ the agarose gel comprises an agarose concentration of from 1.6% to 3% by weight ~~is employed for separating the fibrinogen multimers~~.

21. (Currently Amended) The method as claimed in claim 20, wherein ~~an agarose gel with~~ the agarose gel comprises an agarose concentration of from 1.8% to 2.4% by weight ~~is employed for separating the fibrinogen multimers~~.

22. (Currently Amended) The method as claimed in claim 19, wherein ~~an agarose gel with~~ the agarose gel comprises an agarose concentration of from 0.7% to 1.8% by weight ~~is employed for separating the von Willebrand factor multimers~~.

23. (Currently Amended) The method as claimed in claim 22, wherein ~~an agarose gel with~~ the agarose gel [[~~has~~]] comprises an agarose concentration of from 0.8% to 1.2% by weight ~~is employed for separating the von Willebrand factor multimers~~.

24. (Previously Presented) The method as claimed in claim 16, wherein the gel electrophoresis is carried out at temperatures between 6° C and 14° C.

25. (Previously Presented) The method as claimed in claim 24, wherein the gel electrophoresis is carried out at temperatures between 8° C and 12° C.

26. (Previously Presented) The method as claimed in claim 16, wherein an immunostain is employed for staining the multimer bands on the blotting membrane.

27. (Previously Presented) The method as claimed in claim 17, wherein Coomassie blue dye is employed for blue staining of the multimer bands in the gel.

28. (Currently Amended) The method as claimed in claim 17, wherein [[~~an~~]] the agarose gel [[~~on a~~]] is attached to a backing sheet ~~is employed for the blue staining in the gel~~.

29. (Currently Amended) The method as claimed in claim 16, wherein the agarose gel employed for ~~immunostaining on the blotting membrane~~ the Western blot analysis is chosen from an agarose gel without a backing sheet [[~~or~~]] and an agarose gel ~~with the~~ with a backing sheet removed before the blotting process.

30. (Currently Amended) The method as claimed in claim 16, wherein the multimer bands are quantified by densitometry.

31. (Currently Amended) The method as claimed in claim 30, wherein the multimer bands are quantified after blue staining of the gel.

32. (Currently Amended) The method as claimed in claim 30, wherein the multimer bands are quantified after immunostaining of the blotting membrane.

33. (Previously Presented) The method as claimed in claim 28, wherein the gel is preserved by lamination after the staining.

34. (Previously Presented) The method as claimed in claim 29, wherein the blotting membrane is preserved by lamination after the immunostaining.

35. (New) The method as claimed in claim 16, wherein the multimer bands are visualized by a dye in the gel and wherein the gel is fixed and dried prior to the staining.